

**Rep. Sheryl J. Briggs**  
72 Poplar Hill Road, Mexico, ME 04257

29 July, 2011

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Comment Deadlines Established Regarding the LightSquared Technical Working Group Report, IB  
Docket No. 11-109

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I represent a rural town in Mexico, in the Maine House of Representatives. When I hear about the "Digital Divide," I cringe. It sounds like a polished, sugar coated name for something that has decimated rural economies like mine. That annoying sound of a dial-up connection is a signal of times gone by in Hollywood movies - people laugh at the ancient rite signified by it. In my area, that sound is very real and ever present for many constituents still living on that last mile.

We have worked for years to revitalize our downtown, invest in our local economy and provide opportunities for our young people to flourish here. Each year, though it seems there are more people struggling to make ends meet, find work and raise their families in dignity. More people come to me seeking assistance with their unemployment, food stamps and housing costs. I'm not just talking about the working poor, either. I'm talking about proud families who have worked hard for years and fallen on economic hardship due to the Great Recession. Or worse, because their jobs up and left leaving them a pink slip for their scrapbooks. We don't ask for much and we don't have big dreams, but we do all share a hope and a desire for the American Dream.

That dream is drifting further and further away with each passing year. We have few choices in jobs, but we also have very few choices in internet and cell phone service. While folks in more urban areas can price shop; we're stuck with whatever company can actually provide service. Many of the folks who live outside of the downtown area are forced to get their internet through dial-up.

How are we supposed to transition to the global economy on dial-up? How can my business owners compete on a level playing field when our technology is so far behind urban America, not to mention the rest of the world? To be clear, I'm not asking for a hand-out; we'd be happy to pay for the service... if there was any.

As I understand it, the FCC is currently reviewing a project by LightSquared that would bring 4G wireless broadband internet to communities like mine... to that last mile. There is a debate between the GPS industry and LightSquared over the radio spectrum and that some farmers may have issues with their farming equipment. I have farmers all around me and precision GPS is important to them. But broadband internet is also important. Why should my people have to choose between broadband internet and precision GPS systems simply because they were born in raised in rural Maine?

It is time to move all of America into the 21st Century and finally bridge the gap between communities who have services to choose from and communities who may not have service at all. I encourage the FCC to do all it can to reach a compromise so that rural communities like mine can compete with our urban counterparts. Let's ensure the American Dream is accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live in this great country.

Sincerely,

Sheryl J. Briggs  
State Representative